

12/29/04

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Keith D. Cook  
President

04-313

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November 15, 2004

Michael K. Powell, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am a businessman, with a company providing Banking services in Montana. Telecommunications is critical to my business. Prior to 1996, I had no choice of provider and had to deal with the incumbent telephone monopoly who only gave me inflexible services with inflexible pricing.

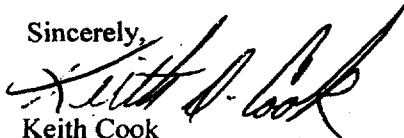
Fortunately, this changed when the Congress passed the 1996 Telecommunications Act, which opened the gates for competition. Today, I receive services from OneEighty Communications, a competitive telecommunications provider. These services are more innovative, reliable and lower priced. It is in part because of these competitive benefits that I have been able to expand my business, serving more customers and hiring more employees.

Now, these benefits are threatened. The Federal Communications Commission is considering undercutting the law by not permitting competitive providers like OneEighty with access to the copper and fiber (unbundled facilities) from the networks of the incumbents. I would note that as a rate payer, I helped to build that infrastructure, and I would like my current telephone company to have access to it! I urge you not to let this withdrawal of access happen. A bad decision will not only directly affect competitive telecommunications providers like OneEighty, it will ripple through the economy, harming thousands of small businesses, their employees, and customers.

The 1996 Act had its desired effect. Here in Montana we have a growing competitive telecommunications industry that has served the business community well. Despite the fact that these facilities-based competitors are small, they have had a dramatic impact on the market, improving our options for service, substantially lowering the cost for those services and spurring the deployment of advanced services such as DSL and metro Ethernet.

Please help to ensure that access to these critical unbundled facilities is not withdrawn from competitive carriers like OneEighty.

Sincerely,



Keith Cook  
Regional President  
Billings Region

Not of Confidential  
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